

# Tale Feathers

Jan 2002

Volume 69  
Number 1

## Notes from the President.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the Holidays will have past and winter is making its presence known. I hope for all our members that the New Year is a Happy one.

Make a New Year's resolution to join us either as a volunteer, join a bird walk or come to one of our general membership meetings. Getting involved is very rewarding. Enjoy life...go Birding!!

accomplished. At a weekend long retreat, representatives from all over Missouri worked hard to lay the foundation of our state organization. Look for further updates in the **Tale Feathers**.

## General Membership Meeting Jan. 15 Page 7

New Executive Director  
Named for **Audubon Missouri**

Roger Still has assumed the executive directorship of our state office. Roger comes from a five-year stint as the state director of Missouri's Nature Conservancy. He also brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm as well. Already, the state board and staff have come together to re-evaluate the strategic plan for our state and what goals can be



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**St. Louis Audubon Society**

## VOLUNTEERS

Sat and/or Sun, Jan 5/6  
Washington State Park Glade  
Restoration

Help the Sierra Club and MO  
DNR re-establish the open,  
native glade community of  
wildflowers and grasses on  
selected, rocky slopes in the  
park.

Hard, physical work, but the  
results are well worth it!

Contact Susan Farrington at  
(314) 577-9402 or  
[susanfmo@aol.com](mailto:susanfmo@aol.com).

Join us for the next newsletter  
mailing party! January 29th at  
7:30 p.m.

Call or write the editor for time  
and place.

The Education Committee is  
looking for a few dedicated  
(or at least a couple of hours  
an month to spare) classroom  
speakers. A new training ses-  
sion will start in January,  
2002. It isn't too early to start  
planning your new year. Join  
us for two nights of training  
plus classroom training. If  
you might be interested in  
volunteering please call Vicki  
Flier at 314-968-9166

## Member Profiles

**Dave Pierce** was elected to the board in April of 2000.

**How would you describe your educational background?**

I have a B.A. in Biology from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and I have taken post-graduate courses from the University of Iowa and the University of California, Berkeley.

**How would you describe your current occupation?**

About a year and a half ago, I turned my hobby (birding) into a profession when I became co-owner of the Wild Bird Center in Creve Coeur. Prior to that, I had been a high school teacher, health agency staffer and quality assurance specialist for the former Sherwood Medical Company in St. Louis.

**What is your current function/role with SLAS?**

I enjoy developing, cataloging and displaying nature collections and exhibits. In the future, I hope to have more cooperative efforts between the chapter and my store, such as the birdseed sale.

**What is your #1 conservation concern at any level, from local to global?**

Habitat destruction. When I moved to the St. Louis area nearly 30 years ago, there were a great number of good birding sites within a few miles of my home. Now all those "special places" are subdivisions and shopping centers.

**In what ways can NAS or SLAS address this concern?**

I would like to see Audubon, like the Nature Conservancy, become more aggressive in purchasing tracts of land that are unique to certain species of birds and wildlife. These would become sanctuaries for future generations to visit and enjoy.

**What is your long-term vision/goals for SLAS?**

The establishment of an impressive nature center staffed with volunteers and professionals, and would include beautiful exhibits of birds of the St. Louis area and much more.

### **Get Published!**

The deadline for the Feb. issue is  
Oct 10. Please send articles,  
events and letters to Anne.

E-mail [ambolte@swbell.net](mailto:ambolte@swbell.net)

phone 314.832.0938

post 6939 Sharp

St. Louis, MO 63116



# **EMERSON**

## **Special Thanks!**

# Conservation Report

*Sue Gustafson*

## ***Lighting of the St. Louis Arch***

Perhaps you've seen recent news reports about the long-awaited lighting of the St. Louis arch by the National Park Service. Channel 4 news coverage included a statement that "many organizations, including the Audubon Society, have assisted in bringing this project to fruition." Why was Audubon involved? The lights on tall structures can distract night-flying migratory birds that depend on the stars for navigation. This is particularly harmful on nights when cloud cover obscures the stars, as birds will fly towards artificial light, which can result in fatalities when they fly into the structure, be it a tall building, a communications tower, or our own arch.

Last spring, Audubon (Lynne Breakstone and I) was invited to participate in meetings with the Park Service initiated by Ken Cohen of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society's (WGNSS) Conservation Committee. We informed arch superintendent Gary Easton of the bird conservation issues related to lighted structures, in addition to the peak migratory periods along the Mississippi flyway. Data provided by WGNSS/Audubon member Randy Korotev (who has compiled 20+ years of data on migratory birds seen in Forest Park) assisted the Park Service in formalizing plans to keep the lights off during the two-week peak of spring migration in May. Also, during a bigger window around that time, the lights will be kept off when the arch's ceilometer (a device that measures cloud height) indicates that cloud cover could pose a problem to migratory birds. We are most pleased and appreciative of Easton and the Park Service's commitment to bird conservation.

We also shared with the Park Service the data compiled in the first two weeks of May 1999 when Lynne Breakstone and one helper searched the sidewalks of downtown buildings at 5 AM looking for birds that had been injured or killed upon flying into a building. The following year, members of the WGNSS Conservation Committee joined forces with Lynne and compiled additional data upon scouring the downtown sidewalks in the wee hours of the morning. (Species found included Ovenbird, Magnolia Warbler, Ovenbird, White-throated Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, Indigo Bunting, Lincoln's Sparrow.) Our two groups will continue to work together to educate building owners about lighted buildings and bird fatalities. We have also made contacts with the Mo. Department of Conservation and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service who have expressed an interest in assisting us in working with the city of St. Louis on this important bird conservation issue.

## **Audubon Camp Scholarships**

The St. Louis Audubon Society is once again pleased to offer scholarships to the Audubon Ecology camps in Maine, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The scholarships cover the cost of the 6 to 7 day camp session fee and include up to \$200.00 towards the cost of transportation. Educators are especially encouraged to apply. Camp scholarship information is typically sent to the science coordinators of the St. Louis area school districts in January. Interested applicants unable to obtain this information from their science coordinators should contact'

Julie Leemann  
1004 Sanders Dr.  
Crestwood, MO  
(314) 962-2093

Camp details are also available on the following websites:

Maine	<a href="http://www.maineaudubon.org">www.maineaudubon.org</a>
Minnesota	<a href="http://www.audubon-center.org">www.audubon-center.org</a>
Wisconsin	<a href="http://www.audubon.org/local/sanctuary/hunthill">www.audubon.org/local/sanctuary/hunthill</a>

Persons interested in having a great vacation and attending camp on their own should call 1-866-428-3826. Experiencing an Audubon camp is truly a wonderful and enriching experience. They are well kept secrets and attendance is often lower than one would expect for the high quality programs offered at very reasonable costs.



# Ornithology 101 for First Graders

*Mitch Leachman*

Have you wondered just what, exactly, does a volunteer with our Speaker's Bureau do and how it fits in with the Education Committee? I certainly did. So, I arranged to sit in on a presentation the Speaker's Bureau recently gave to Ms. Schaedler's first grade class at Ellisville Elementary School. What follows will, I hope, give you a better idea of not only *what* they do, but also *why*.

Vicki Flier, SLAS Education Committee Chair, was contacted last year by the Partners In Education (PIE) program at the Rockwood School District. PIE is a nationwide network of parents and other volunteers that look outside their schools for subject expertise the school does not have. Vicki proposed that the Audubon Society design and present educational modules on birds. With only a few volunteers, including a retired teacher, they quickly developed presentations for several grade levels. In just the first year of the Audubon programs, the committee presented to over 2,200 students in four school districts!

Today, Vicki and Dale Ponce, are talking to a typical first grade classroom of about twenty-five students. "Eeeewwwhhh!!!" the kids exclaim as the freeze-dried bird specimens are produced. The initial shock is followed by a hurtful query, "You *kill* birds, too?" Vicki patiently explains that all their birds are found dead of natural causes, and they would never kill a bird for any reason. The team is practiced at pouring lots of first-grade size knowledge nuggets into the short, forty-five minute presentation. With hawk, cardinal, woodpecker, duck and blue jay specimens, the children are shown how to tell what a bird eats based on the shape of its bill. A carnivore, like a hawk, has a curved, pointed bill for tearing flesh; whereas an herbivore, like the cardinal, has a strong, pliers-like bill for cracking the hard shells of seeds.

Although the bird presentations are the most popular, the Audubon group has quickly expanded their offerings to include presentations on butterflies, trees, and is now developing a program on the life of a river. Through just two months of this school year, over 300 students have learned just a little bit about the world outside their backdoor. And the audience is not restricted to schools or kids. Church, civic, and other conservation-minded groups have requested programs.

Ms. Schaedler's students have recently been learning about the rainforests in South America. When Dale asks what they have learned is being done to the rainforest, several respond with cutting down the trees for lumber. Vicki and Dale then describe how many of the birds they see in the summer eat insects and fruits that cannot be found here in the winter. So, the birds fly south to places like the rainforest where there is food and shelter-as long as there are trees. "But," Vicki says, "you kids can help save birds' homes right here in Missouri." With most of Missouri logging providing wood pulp for paper products, she and Dale explain that reducing the demand for paper through recycling can help the birds that live year-round right here.

In spite of great strides in the last decade in government protection of wild animals and places, a majority of adult Americans do not actively participate in efforts to preserve such places. Encouraging a *child's* interest in and personal connection with the outdoors is believed to be the best way to develop adults that are committed to protecting the plants and animals that live there. Audubon chapters across the country, that have been educating people about birds and other wildlife for generations, are in a unique position to help achieve this. While National Audubon has begun a nationwide program to build 1,000 nature centers for public education, SLAS' volunteers are hoping to touch the hearts of the first through fourth graders in their in-class programs.

Finally, Dale asks what the children's parents do about annoying bugs in their backyards. Hearing that they spray insecticides, the team tells the class about all the "good" bugs that are killed along with the bad. Also, they describe how many birds eat bugs, dead or alive, and ingest those same insecticides that can be very harmful, possibly even fatal, to the bird itself. In the resource packet that Vicki provides Ms. Schaedler, the children will receive handouts for their parents on alternative pest control that is non-lethal to birds.

With twenty-five pairs of hands clapping and the class shouting a collective, "Thank you," Vicki and Dale make their exit. They have much work to do, with three more classes of first-graders to present to this morning. The children may not long remember the *facts* that they were taught this morning, but then their *interest* in the outdoors is what matters most. For these first graders will be our future politicians, educators, and conservationists.

## Winter Birding may be Cold but Rewarding

*Jim Malone*

In November, St. Louis Audubon society had two local birding trips, and one in early December. On the 10th of November, 30 of us visited Riverlands Environmental Demonstration area near Alton, Illinois. Our efforts were rewarded with a good variety of waterfowl including the season's first Black Scoter and Trumpeter Swans. We had a good variety of ducks in addition to American White Pelicans, a common Loon, Krieder's red-tailed hawk, and a Peregrin falcon. On the 18th, we visited Horseshoe Lake and scoured the area looking for specialties of the season. In addition to the usual range of late Fall / early Winter ducks, we saw many Bonaparte's Gulls, Pied-Billed Grebes, and a handful of sparrows. December 9th we returned to Riverlands for an afternoon visit. We had hoped to see Short-eared Owls in the grassy fields as the sun set, but they must not have known about our plans. Although we didn't see the owls, we did see several wonderful things, including 3 Surf Scoters, 2 black scoters, 4 Snow Buntings, 36 Trumpeter Swans, 40 Horned Grebes, lots of Greater White-fronted Geese, and a great variety of other waterfowl. Come out and join us on the following January and February outings and see what we can find then!

**January 5 (Saturday) Horseshoe Lake, 9 AM** During the winter, the two most reliable birding locations in the St. Louis area are Riverlands and Horseshoe Lake. Although Riverlands usually has the best variety and numbers of waterfowl, Horseshoe Lake has surprises of its own. Often special waterfowl (like Long-tailed Ducks) grace the lake on the highway 111 side, and various Grebes may show up at any time. The borrow pits near the landfill on the highway 203 side of the lake can have interesting varieties of wintering gulls, and is also a great site for raptors. This outing will involve small amounts of walking on paved level ground. To get to the meeting point, take I-70 East from St. Louis. After passing the I-70/I-64 split, take the exit for highway 111. Turn left (north) and follow highway 111 about 2-3 miles to the Park entrance on the left. We will meet in the first parking lot on the right as you enter the park.

**February 9 (Saturday) Riverlands, 9 AM** Once again we will return to Riverlands during the winter season. Often ice on the river creates interesting birding opportunities at this location. During past visits to Riverlands when the river was partly frozen we have seen Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, Long-tailed Ducks,

# St. Louis Audubon Society's Bi-Annual Birdseed Sale

Friday, February 15th from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00p.m. and Saturday, February 16th from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Order for the early winter season and be the first on your block to start seeing the flocks migrate to your feeders. Order by Friday, February 8th for the 12th and 13th pickup. Seed must be picked by February 17th at the latest unless other arrangements have been made.

**Make check payable to St. Louis Audubon Society and mail to:**

Vicki Flier  
18 Algonquin Wood Place  
Glendale, MO 63122-2013  
314-968-9166

**Pick up will be at the NEW location of Wild Bird Center**

12792 Olive Blvd.  
Bellerive Plaza  
Creve Coeur, MO 63141

All proceeds from the birdseed sale fund the education outreach programs.

**Wild Bird Center** is approximately two miles west of I-270 near Mason Road and Timber Run in the Bellerive Plaza. Look for the store between Schnucks and Hallmark. Any Audubon volunteer who would like to shop during this time gets 10 percent off any merchandise.

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# WWW.STOPHOLNAM.COM NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!

*Yvonne Homeyer*

The Missouri Coalition for the Environment has spearheaded a powerful media campaign designed to draw attention to its web site, [www.stopholnam.com](http://www.stopholnam.com). Using a \$50,000 grant from the Florence Foundation, the Coalition created the web site and paid for radio ads, a billboard at I-270 & 55, and signs on the sides of Bi-State buses. But advertising costs money! To keep this media campaign going, St. Louis Audubon, the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, North American Butterfly Association (NABA-St. Louis) and other groups are working together with the Coalition to raise money, both from organizations and individuals. If you would like to help, make your tax-deductible contribution payable to "Coalition for the Environment Foundation" and mail it to 6267 Delmar, 2nd Floor, St. Louis, Mo. 63130.

Earmark your check for "Holnam PR campaign" and be sure to include "Foundation" - that's what makes your contribution tax-deductible. Thank you for your generosity!

Yvonne Homeyer

Conservation Chairperson

WGNSS

314 963 7750

[homeyer@earthlink.net](mailto:homeyer@earthlink.net)

## General Membership Meeting and Speaker

Tuesday, January 15, 2002 at 7:30 p.m. at the Powder Valley Nature Center.

*Bird Watch: Sightings, Behaviors and Activities from our Nation's Capital*

Pelicans are not the biggest birds that migrate. Come learn about the activities of the biggest "migratory birds" of America-your Congressmen!! Although these Frequent Fliers have two nests, by far the most important one is located here. These "big birds" are supposed to be keeping watch over the entire flock-you, that is. But it's your responsibility to make sure your chirps, chips, and quacks are heard!

Desiree Sorenson-Groves from Audubon's Public Policy Office in Washington, D.C., will discuss the recent successes and future plans for National Audubon priorities in the 107th Congress.

Plus, meet other members and discover opportunities for involvement throughout the society. Open to all, members or not. Refreshments will be available.

From the intersection of Interstates 44 & 270, take Watson Rd. to Geyer Rd. Turn north on Geyer for 200 yds. to Cragwold Rd. Go west on Cragwold for 1 mi. to nature center entrance on right. Follow drive to parking lot. Enter building through left entrance.

Questions, call Mitch Leachman at 314-739-5112.

## Tale Feathers

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Anne Bolte edits the newsletter.

## St. Louis Audubon Society 2001 - 2002

St. Louis Audubon Society

P.O. Box 220227

Kirkwood, MO 63122

Phone: 314-822-6595

### Officers

President - Mary Dueren	314-576-1473
VP Education - Vicki Flier	314-968-9166
VP Conservation - Sue Gustafson	314-968-8128
VP Finance - John Solodar	314-862-5294
Treasurer - Mary Dueren	314-576-1473
Secretary - Mary Smidt	636-227-6127

### Board Members

Mike Arduser	314-968-8479
Bill Brandhorst	314-965-7269
Anne Bolte	314-832-0938
Tom Day	314-962-4064
Joe Eades	314-966-3171
Mike Grant	636-579-0208
Diane Johnson	636-458-4369
Dency Kahn	314-997-4555
Mitch Leachman	314-739-5112
Pat McCormick	636-825-2842
Jim Malone	636-536-1119
Jerry Miller	314-389-3969
Dave Pierce	314-434-1651

# St. Louis Audubon Society

P.O. Box 220227

St. Louis, Mo. 63122

Ph: 314.822.6595

www.stlouisaudubon.org



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This form makes you a member of **both** the National and St. Louis Audubon.

Audubon is a membership organization dedicated to protecting birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Our members are the source of our volunteer strength and the foundation of our financial support. By becoming a member, you will receive National Audubon Society's magazine as well as the St. Louis Audubon Society newsletter, *Tale Feathers*.

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## St. Louis Audubon Society Membership Form

### Membership category desired:

- ☐ Introductory / \$20  
☐ Special two-year Introductory / \$30  
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☐ Student / \$15  
☐ Other / \_\_\_\_\_

Send a check made out to:  
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P.O. Box 220227  
St. Louis, Mo. 63122

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Please support your local chapter. Use this form to join or renew.